



P.O. Box 70, 1066 Saybrook Road  
Haddam, CT, 06438

March 5, 2022

**Re: Testimony for House Bill 5291**

Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed, we write in support of Raised House Bill 5291, *An Act Authorizing Bonding for Bikeways, Greenways, and Recreational Trails*. The Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed is a federally designated Wild & Scenic River in Eastern Connecticut. Its primary focus is to ensure that the Outstanding Resource Values, for which it was designated, remain protected.

All of the towns that make up the Eightmile River Watershed actively seek to offer outdoor recreation trails for the general public. The Eightmile Committee itself has provided funding for a number of local projects, including to the State of Connecticut, that support outdoor initiatives. The Committee also coordinates the *Goodwin Trail Committee*, a group of local stewards that maintain a 14-mile trail system through 4 towns. Funding is necessary not only to address growing need and maintenance of existing trail systems, but to also engage in long term planning to focus on the impacts of climate change, trail density and protection of critical habitats. Additional funding could provide new opportunities on other lands, while reducing impacts to overdeveloped parcels.

This important bill would increase the bond authorization for the Recreational Trails and Greenways Grants program to \$6 million to meet the growing need as demonstrated with the last grant round.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Patricia M. Young".

Patricia Young  
Program Director  
Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed  
1066 Saybrook Road  
Haddam, CT 06438  
860.490.8093  
pyoung@eightmileriver.org